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By the River, by the Water

Rivers define the landscape and the lives of those who live along their banks. They supply water, food and construction materials, and make the land fertile. Rivers transport people and goods, and are the source of many myths and legends. They are places of recreation and the habitat for countless animal and plant species. All over the world, the quantity and the quality of river water are decisive in determining the quality of life. On our journeys along the rivers of the world, we meet people who live with the water and depend on it for their livelihood and provide insights into cultures and habitats.

- 01 The Mekong – China’s Wild River** HD
In China, the Mekong is called Lancang Jiang, or ‘Wild River’. In the north, its torrents have cut deep valleys; an old tea-trading route runs along its banks. Hundreds of kilometers further downstream, the Wild River has been tamed by dams. In the subtropical rainforest to the south, the river provides a habitat for China’s last wild elephant population, numerous species of monkey and even the odd tiger.
- 02 The Thames – Pride of England**
For many English people, the Thames is much more than just a river – it’s a national treasure. It is just 346 kilometers long, but passes through a wide variety of landscapes and is steeped in history and tradition. We follow that route across England, through the London docks, to the once elegant resorts where the Thames flows into the North Sea.
- 03 The Niger – Through the Heart of Africa** HD
We take a trip on the ‘Général Soumaré’ past ancient clay cities and through spectacular natural habitats. The Niger forms a natural border with the Sahara Desert. Its fluctuating water levels determine the rhythm of life for the people and animals living along its banks.
- 04 The Amazon – South America’s Life Force**
The banks of the great Amazon River are inhabited by native peoples and settlers, gold-diggers and adventurers. The Amazon is one of the continent’s main arteries. There are few roads nearby, so people often travel by boat.
- 05 The Rhine – Germany’s Romantic Loreley Valley**
The Loreley Valley is a gorgeous stretch of the Rhine that is rich in romantic castles and medieval towns and attracts tourists from all over the world. The people who live there are facing a difficult balancing act – upholding tradition while acknowledging that modernization requires change.
- 06 The Ayeyarwady – Myanmar Revealed**
Myanmar is only just beginning to admit foreign visitors. A cruise on the Ayeyarwady River affords a first impression of the country’s great treasures. From the golden Buddha statues and temples of the old city of Mandalay, to the 2,200 pagodas and temples of the old royal city of Bagan, Myanmar is starting to reveal its secrets to the world.
- 07 The Saint Lawrence – Canada’s Gateway to the World**
The Saint Lawrence River links key industrial centers of Canada and the United States with world markets. Huge deep-sea tankers are guided past rapids and sandbanks. Its estuary is the largest in the world. Its waters are home to whales and seals, its banks are a blaze of color in the fall.
- 08 The Ganges – India’s Holy River**
The Ganges is more than just a river, it is also a deity. Hindus believe its waters have the power to cleanse a person of all sins. At the same time, it is one of the world’s most contaminated rivers, in part because of the booming economy. The Ganges is the face of India, a symbol of both tradition and modernity.

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By the River, by the Water

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09 The Yenisei – Russia's River of Tears

Ships are only able to sail down the Yenisei to regions north of the Arctic Circle during the short Siberian summer. When the river is icebound, the villages along its banks are practically cut off from the outside world. There are no roads or railway links to this desolate region. Most of the people who live here are descendants of those displaced and banished during the Stalin era. For them, the Yenisei is both a lifeline and a source of great sorrow.

10 The Nile – The Father of African Rivers

The ancient Egyptians revered the Nile as a deity. The great river determines the rhythm of life in the region to this day. The Nile is also an unparalleled source of inspiration. Egypt was one of the first travel destinations in the history of modern tourism. Our journey takes us from the primeval forests in the heart of Africa to the cultural treasures in the land of the pharaohs.

11 The Oder River – A Beautiful Boundary in Europe

Isolated beaches, romantic villages and meadows line the Oder. For a long time the river was a symbol of the division of Europe. But what used to be a no man's land between Germany and Poland is now a haven for rare animals and plants.

12 The Jordan River – A Journey Through the Holy Land

The Jordan River flows through a stunning landscape rich in history and culture. The river is the region's most important source of fresh water. It irrigates farmland in the Negev desert and supplies cities with drinking water. But this unrelenting demand is reducing the river to a rivulet downstream – with catastrophic consequences for the lower Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea.

13 The Indus River – A Vital Resource

People have lived along the Indus River for millennia. It is the largest river on the Indian subcontinent and Pakistan's main artery. It has witnessed the rise and fall of great civilizations, and the ebb and flow of customs and traditions. As people seek to manage their lives in politically and economically challenging times, they rely on this majestic waterway for their livelihoods, and look to it for inspiration.

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